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NATIONAL STATE AND CITY BANK

1111 East Main Street

Heroic Service of the "Mail Carriers" of the Mountain



Make-believe hold-up of the old mail back.

The auto has superseded the old mail back crossing Shenandoah Mountain.

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.] Monterey, Va., December 21.—Of the vast army of men employed in the government mail service none has a harder lot than the "mail carrier" of the mountains. They have never been lauded as heroes, yet a sketch of their lives would disclose a career of grinding monotony and heroic service. Uncle Sam has just posted his quadrennial call for bids on the various far routes, and when these bids are opened he will no doubt wonder what has become of the old-fashioned mail boy who seemed always anxious for a government job and was willing to

POEMS OF
Hyde Fowlkes

just appearing, is the work of a Virginia lady, eliciting from across both oceans praise high in measure and source. The most accomplished magazine editor of his day, inflexible in standard as chary of flattery, declares these utterances to "well justify their publication," while the strongest confirmation is added in the verdict of one of Harvard's able sagacities: "their poetical vigor, spiritual richness and intensity, entitle them to a wide audience." That the poem, "Loneliness," is pronounced by a genius of world-wide fame, "Wonderful—truly sublime," is significant, while the assertion of the discriminating author of "Studies in Southern Poetry" that any writer who could produce such work is worthy of serious consideration, gives assurance that within its pages may be found others equal in lofty conception. Among the best class of readers the love of TRUE poetry has ever waned, and the ranking assigned here by critics of international repute would bring ample welcome. Publishers: The Cosmopolitan Press, New York. \$1.05 by mail.



"STANDING ROCK," Historic point on Staunton and Parkersburg Pike, between Monterey and McDowell.

work for wages.

The consensus of opinion among patrons, postmasters and former contractors is that the bids submitted in the present letting of the mountain star routes will prove that this particular branch of the mail service must have its first reckoning with the changed conditions and complex problems of the twentieth century.

It is necessarily true, in spite of the painstaking and apparent familiarity with all the minor details, much of the department's knowledge is theoretical. There are many local conditions, of vital relevancy at this time, with which Uncle Sam is about to become acquainted. The growth and development of the

service on any one star route could scarcely be more phenomenal or interesting than that over the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike, through the heart of the Alleghenies. It affords an interesting study, because going upon the reasonable presumption that the service has been commensurate with the demands, the growth of this service shows, relatively the development of a remote, isolated section.

This noted highway was built in 1828, and at once became an avenue of traffic between the Valley of Virginia and the trans-Alleghany country and hastened the development of the intervening area. The only available local data as to mail service is subse-

quent to that date, the first being a weekly horseback service by Porterfield Helskel, whose contract extended from Staunton to Parkersburg, a distance of 240 miles.

The next contractor was James Trotter, who gained notoriety by a letter, couched in "cuss words," sent to the department at Washington and which was framed and is said to be still in evidence there. His route extended as far as Beverly, W. Va., and a coach-and-four were used in making the semi-weekly trips. The driver, Thomas Jefferson Jones, heralding his approach from every mountain top by the prolonged blast of a trumpet.

Stephen J. Reynolds, a Highlander, took the route in 1862, and the near-pathetic experience of one of his carriers deserves passing notice. The route at that time terminated at Monterey, the distance covered being nearly fifty miles. To make this trip in winter, sometimes with run-down horses, the start had to be made before daylight, the carrier getting to Monterey any time from 7 to 10 P. M., half frozen and exhausted. This long exposure to cold resulted in total deafness, and his prolonged life in the saddle caused his legs to become rigid and stiff, taking the full shape of the horse's body. The poor fellow is still living, a feeble old man, and though thirty-five years have elapsed, he still attests his right to a pension by a pair of bandy legs between which a 200-pound porker could rush without ruffling a bristle. Men who have rendered much less faithful and arduous public service are to-day subsisting on government pay.

The tri-weekly service, alternating between horseback and buckboard, continued on this route until 1878, when the department made of it a double daily, hawks being employed, one leaving each end of the line at 6 A. M. For something like thirty years the same contractor has had the work in hand, rendering most efficient and systematic service.

terprise by C. G. Cross, made for him a national reputation. He served as driver for nineteen consecutive years, and during that time traveled 273,562 miles, or nearly eleven times around the world. In spite of the rigor of the Appalachian winters a trip was rarely missed. During the prevalence of snow blockades, hawks were abandoned and the horses converted into literal "beasts of burden." Three or four bags of mail would be hoisted to the back of one and started along the narrow path that skirted the drifts, while the undaunted driver followed astride another horse, hidden neck-deep in mail pouches tied on behind and behind him.

Arduous as was the task of maintaining and operating the back service during the past quarter of a century, the hauling of passengers and freight yielded an income which rendered it profitable.

In fact, so prominent and extensive did this feature become that it was soon recognized as the prime consideration in point of emolument, and contracts with the government were signed at a figure representing less than one-half the running expenses.

The automobile now has superseded the old mail hack. The hauling of passengers can no longer be regarded as a trump card or even a side line. As to what this signifies the depart-

ment can know but little and will doubtless be surprised when local ideas find expression in the figures submitted in the 1912 bidding.

Another important question ancient the subject of minor gravity but certainly not to be overlooked, is the inevitable swelling of the ranks incident to the adoption of the parcels post. There are times, even now, when the vehicles in use are barely adequate in conveying the mails. To what extent the parcels post will increase the burden is only problematical, but it is a bugbear, and looms up as a formidable factor in the "issue joined." The trade of the mail order house has grown to big proportions and is constantly increasing. There are scores of country homes in which the catalogue of the mail order man is as much in evidence as the family Bible and where little ones are as familiar with their names as they are with the mythical patron saint of their childhood. Christmas, the postal express will unquestionably prove a potent auxiliary, and the consequent increase along this line cannot be intelligently approximated.

The maximum allowed by the government for present service on this route is \$2,500. A new limit will have to be fixed.

Washington: Miss Maude Burruss, of Partlow, and Miss Annie Cheving, of Childsburg. The ushers were Lester Dillard, Willie Partlow and John Spence, of Richmond.

The breakfast guests included Mr. and Mrs. M. P. Waite, Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Partlow, Mr. and Mrs. R. L. Dillard, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Dillard, Mr. and Mrs. Eddie Burruss, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Cheving, Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Cheving, Mr. and Mrs. W. P. Waite, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. Philip Pritchett, Mr. and Mrs. Hoover Hanger, Mrs. C. M. Pritchett, Mrs. Mary Johnson, Mrs. O. B. Hurton, Misses Flossie Partlow, Margaret Murphy, Annie Cheving, Maude Burruss, Bessie Leathers, Nellie Murphy, Nannie Waite and Carrie Waite. Messrs. John Spence, Lester Dillard, Louis Partlow, Willie Partlow, Elmer Burruss, John Pritchett, Chesley Waite, Walter Chiles and Dr. Frank Dillard.

Council Committee Meetings. The only meetings of Council committees for the coming week are scheduled for Monday, the rest of the week will be observed as Christmas holiday. The program follows:

Monday—Special Committee on Rules at 5 o'clock, Common Council at 8 o'clock, St. John's Burying Ground at 8 o'clock, Finance at 8 o'clock, Markets at 7:50 o'clock.

SOUTH BOSTON

[Special to The Times-Dispatch.]

South Boston, Va., December 21.—Mrs. J. P. Sneed, of this place, is visiting her son, B. C. Sneed, in New York. Walter N. Poindexter, formerly of this county, but now of Tennessee, was a visitor in South Boston this week. He is well known and has a large number of friends at this place.

Mrs. Richard Crane, of Bridgeport, Conn., is the guest of her mother, Mrs. Mary C. Bruce, at "Berry Hill," near this place.

Nicholas B. Edmunds, of Kentucky, is visiting his sister, Mrs. S. C. Morton, Sr., on upper Main.

At a stated communication of South Boston Lodge, No. 21, A. F. & A. M., held on Monday, the following officers were elected for the ensuing Masonic year: W. C. Conner, worshipful master; W. D. Blair, senior warden; J. R. Ferrell, junior warden; J. D. Tucker, treasurer; H. W. Woodall, secretary; W. C. Waller, senior deacon; C. B. Webster, junior deacon; J. W. Fitz, tiler; Rev. J. R. Dean, chaplain; P. H. Johnson and S. A. Moorefield, stewards.

Simpson-Partlow.

Fredericksburg, Va., December 21.—In the presence of a large number of friends from Washington, Richmond and Baltimore, Miss Catherine O. Partlow, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Lancelotti Partlow, of Partlow, Va., and Mr. Robert Simpson, of Richmond, were married at noon to-day at the Midge Road Baptist Church, Brokenburg, Spotsylvania county.

The ceremony was performed by Rev. E. E. Sanders, and was followed by a wedding breakfast at the home of the bride and groom. The bride, of the bride, and the groom then left for Richmond, and from there they will go on their wedding trip North. They will make their home in Richmond.

Miss Flossie Elizabeth Partlow, of Richmond, was maid of honor, and John Harris best man. The bridesmaids were Miss Margaret Murphy, of

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Christmas and New Year

HOLIDAY TICKETS ON N. & W.

Christmas and New Year holiday tickets at reduced rates will be sold to and from points on Norfolk and Western Railway, December 23 to December 25, inclusive, and again on December 31 and January 1, all good for return passage until January 8, 1913. The round trip fare from Richmond to Norfolk will be \$2.45, and to Lynchburg, \$3.95. For further information, apply to any agent of the company, or to C. A. Overton, Jr., City Passenger Agent, 325 East Main Street, or to C. H. BOSLEY, District Passenger Agent. (Advertisement.)

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